



El Paso County Commissioner

Candidates are listed in the order they appear on the official ballot. All responses are presented as received from the candidates, without editing for grammar, punctuation, or spelling and were truncated if they exceeded the specified word limit.

Citizens Project

2016 June Primary Election

District 3

Quick Info

REPUBLICAN

**Stan VanderWerf**

Email: stan@stanforcommissioner.com

Website: stanforcommissioner.com

Phone: 719-452-4802

Education: Industrial Engineering

Undergraduate, International Relations Masters, National Resourcing Masters, ICAF, ACSC, SOS, more.

Occupation: Business Owner, Previously Air Force Colonel (0-6) and Commander

**Karen S. Cullen**

Email: info@electkarencullen.com

Website: ElectKarenCullen.com

Phone: 719-440-3539

Education: 12+ years & Certified National Institute Pension Administrators

Occupation: IT Consultant/Property Management

DEMOCRAT

**Electra Johnson**

Email: electra@saltworkshop.com

Website: ElectElectra.com

Phone: 719-290-7387

Education: CU Boulder of Architecture and Planning / Masters in Architecture /Masters in Urban

Design. CSU, College of Applied Human Sciences, Cum Laude Bachelor of Science Interior Design / Construction Management. CU Boulder, Studio Arts Major

Occupation: Architectural/Urban Designer



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1. *What are your qualifications for this position? (150 words)*

REPUBLICAN



Stan VanderWerf

With 28 years in public service and 5 years as an entrepreneur creating and running successful businesses, I bring the best qualifications among the candidates. My experience includes designing and operating large public budgets, disaster planning/recovery, and policy creation, all key Commissioner skills. I led my Korean Command through recovery from the worst typhoon in Korean history and received a national award for reducing policies while improving performance. My university degrees are well suited to improving efficiencies in public agencies. I can create professional teams, use innovation, establish vision, and deliver solutions to large problems. I never achieve these successes myself. Friendships, networks, finding common ground, and people relationships are how great ideas get delivered. I have extensive leadership experience and will work with the community to solve problems. I'm also a community volunteer and support Westside Cares, Angel Flight, and several non-profits working to grow the economy.



Karen S. Cullen

El Paso County deserves and expects an experienced, proven leader. My diverse background and experience includes real estate, IRS technical information for retirement plans, Information Technology (IT) Manager and project/program management of multi-million dollar projects. As a small business owner, both in IT and hospitality/tourism, I have had to manage a budget, write a paycheck, hire, fire, and in my role, offered support and assisted an employee through a domestic violence situation. I have served on multiple boards and commissions at the state and local level, including the Colorado Hotel and Lodging Association, Historic Preservation Commission, Innkeepers of Colorado and most recently as President of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau and Office of Economic Development. I am a graduate of the El Paso County Citizens College and have prepared myself to hit the ground running as the next Commissioner in District 3.

DEMOCRAT



Electra Johnson

My experience and training as a Architect, Urban Designer and Construction Manager where I have been in the role of facilitator, designer & advocate for municipalities, communities & individuals prepares me for issues Commissioner's face every day. The role I have had in managing large infrastructure projects has included implementation strategies, community consensus building, urban visioning, writing codes & policies, & creating smart, sustainable, comprehensive solutions within a budget. My qualifications and experience coupled with my role as a small business owner, an advocate for the elderly, a mother and citizen who deeply cares about our community give me the tools and passion to work to protect our natural resources, convert to clean energy, making wise decisions that help boost our local economy through start up development & local innovation as well as developing smart growth & sustainable regenerative infrastructure systems to carry us into the future.



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2. *What are the two most pressing issues facing El Paso County and how will you address them? (150 words)*

REPUBLICAN



Stan VanderWerf

While relatively well run, the County has pressing issues related to citizen service and quality of life. Most fit two broad categories: 1) infrastructure, and 2) economic development. Infrastructure includes internal County efficiency improvements and external issues like roads, flood and fire mitigation, integrated parks and trails, and preparation for the next disaster. I will lead initiatives to better focus PPRTA, utilize grant funding, improve county efficiencies, and ensure community preparation for future disasters. Economic Development brings improved job opportunities and should be addressed in a multi-industry setting including aerospace, tourism, and sports. I will work with the Regional Business Alliance and other non-profits to grow our local businesses. I will help lead improved infrastructure investment, reduction in vagrancy and homelessness, and ensure the County minimizes interference with growth. People and companies grow the economy. Government policy must strive for freer people and markets while ensuring fairness and safety.



Karen S. Cullen

Public Safety and Jobs and the Economy. Public safety includes disaster preparedness and recovery that our community faces with threatening fires and flash-floods. The impacts of these disasters influence our local and statewide economy. This includes protecting our most valuable resource; our watershed and water resources for a clean, safe environment. Fires and floods can deposit toxins that impact our health and safety and threaten our water supply. We have experienced four declared disasters in three years and each occurrence produces negative publicity and prevents people from visiting our amazing community. Our economy and job creation is a high priority and we must have access to an educated workforce for potential companies to invest in El Paso County. We also have our two major industries of tourism and the military to protect and promote. New access to grow jobs in the area of Cyber Security and sports medicine is key.

DEMOCRAT



Electra Johnson

Our 2 most pressing issues are 1) Diversifying our Economy and 2) Protecting our Natural Resources. By enhancing our economy with 21st Century sustainable, regenerative clean energy solutions, transit options, a development climate that prioritizes local business including decisions encouraging smart growth and infill development we solve both issues. By capitalizing on our investments in our local economy we can transform El Paso County into a center of innovation & engineering focusing on primary jobs development for graduates from UCCS, CC, PPCC, AFA & our veterans allowing them to stay in our community because they can support a family, a career, pay off student loans & buy a home. This coupled with protection of our trails and open space, viewing our watersheds as precious resources, smart solutions to fire protections & storm water & developing our local food systems allows us to become more independent & sovereign as a region.



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District 3

3. *What should be the county's budget priorities and how will you fund those priorities? (100 words)*

REPUBLICAN



Stan VanderWerf

Funding should focus initially on improving internal county performance through better use of technology and training. Internal savings, an improved economy, and external sources like grants and private contributions will generate funds to better address external needs as mentioned in the 2nd question. I will work with the community to introduce new ideas to grow our economy and generate increased public revenue for re-investment. It is my belief a County tax increase is not needed. In several of my past military assignments, we were faced with budget reductions, but still found ways to save money and improve performance.



Karen S. Cullen

Budget priorities are public safety, jobs and the economy and transportation. Public safety includes supporting law enforcement, wildland fire, disaster preparedness/recovery, public health and safe neighborhoods. These items are funded through tax dollars, public/private partnerships and the Public Safety 1A initiative. As a statutory county, a commissioner's role is to implement state and federal mandates. It is my priority to work with local, state and federal officials, as well as community leaders to stand up against and reduce unfunded mandates, especially those designed through alternative agendas. This is an area where building relationships is particularly important to getting things done.

DEMOCRAT



Electra Johnson

Our budget priorities should be; protecting our existing infrastructure from threats of floods and fire by reducing redundancy and improving efficiency in our county and city operations; claiming our fair share of federal funds for sustainable infrastructure solutions that leverage development potential and incentives through smart growth strategies that enable a robust, diverse economy; capitalizing on our assets and fostering synergies in our land use patterns; managing infrastructure projects within budget and investing in transit and affordable housing solutions. By fostering local business development, the dollars made in El Paso County will stay in El Paso County.



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2016 June Primary Election

District 3

4. Recently the Board of El Paso County Commission passed a resolution opposing the relocation of refugees to El Paso County. Do you support that resolution - why or why not? (50 words)

REPUBLICAN



Stan VanderWerf

The resolution doesn't oppose relocation or persons seeking freedom. It states no funds will be spent supporting unvetted/uncertified refugees. We cannot ignore the risks of global terrorism. Our community has been found on terrorist attack lists. I support legal vetted immigration and this resolution. They are not exclusive.



Karen S. Cullen

I support the resolution. We must be fiscally responsible for our overall community. We need to be involved at a local level to ensure our own national security. El Paso County has valuable national assets to protect including the citizens of the State of Colorado and the United States.

DEMOCRAT



Electra Johnson

As a nation of immigrants we must approach human suffering with compassion and kindness not ignorance and fear. Refugees come from horrific situations, go through a lengthy and extensive vetting process, arrive with nothing and rapidly become a self reliant part of the community often taking the lowest paying jobs.



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Citizens Project

2016 June Primary Election

District 4

Quick Info

REPUBLICAN



Longinos Gonzalez Jr.

Email: longinosjr@gmail.com
Website: LonginosForColorado.com

Phone: 719- 203-7168

Education: B.S. Political Science

(USAF Academy)/ M.S. Science Education (Florida International University)

Occupation: Retired Air Force Officer, Current Teacher



Scott Turner

Email: info@scottturnerworksfor-you.com

Website: scottturnerworksforyou.com

Phone: 719-203-0153

Education: University of Houston

Occupation: Community Banker

DEMOCRAT



Liz Rosenbaum

Email: herstorycafe@gmail.com
Website: rosenbaum4commissioner2016.com

Phone: 719-661-5108

Education: Secondary Education, Social Sciences

Occupation: Small Business Owner



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2016 June Primary Election

District 4

1. *What are your qualifications for this position? (150 words)*

REPUBLICAN



Longinos Gonzalez Jr.

I have an extensive range of experience and leadership that will prove valuable on our board of commissioners. District 4 includes Ft Carson, vast plains/farmland, and municipalities of various sizes that my background fits well. I have worked successfully in agriculture, the military, education and small business and alongside law enforcement. I have extensive budgeting experience from my time in the military and business which includes multi-million dollar projects, and have provided input on land use and veterans issues at commissioner and council meetings. I helped save local residents \$1.35 million and will bring this same efficiency and fiscal responsibility to the county level. I have worked successfully with multi-agency organizations and managed numerous offices and personnel at various levels. I am a volunteer/member on a city police and fire department committee.



Scott Turner

I have lived and worked in El Paso County for over 40 years and am very active in my community. I currently serve as the Advisory Board President to the Fountain Salvation Army, and have been a board member of the Fountain Valley Senior Center for the past 9 years. I have also serve and have served on several El Paso County Citizens Advisory organizations including the Budget Oversight Committee, Highway Advisory Committee, Pikes Peak Regional Transportation Authority Advisory Committee and the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments Citizen Advisory Committee. As a long-time community banker I truly understand the needs of our small businesses and understand that a better business environment means more and better jobs for all of us here in El Paso County.

DEMOCRAT



Liz Rosenbaum

Army Commanders Award for Pubic Service
Successful Small business owner 12+ yrs
High School history teacher at Widefield HS
Member of Zonta 2+ yrs Women's Empowerment and Advocacy International Organization
Active in local politics for many years
I'm a mom and school volunteer with my kids' activities



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District 4

2. What are the two most pressing issues facing El Paso County and how will you address them? (150 words)

REPUBLICAN



Longinos Gonzalez Jr.

-Strengthening Public Safety (Sheriff and Fire): Improving emergency response times; increasing efficiency through combined training, dispatch & communication with local municipalities; fighting illegal marijuana grows & related illicit activity.

-Roads & Infrastructure: We have worsening roads and infrastructure which I will bring increased focus to, and prioritize for improvement. I will fight for prioritized budgeting for both of these areas of emphasis in upcoming budgets. Additionally, I believe a thorough review/audit of the budget will identify efficiencies that can better fund these critical functions for the county. Cutting administrative red tape and streamlining permits will improve the local business climate that will lead to increased revenues without raising taxes that can further fund county priorities.

-In addition to these two, I believe that maintaining a strong military presence and defending local bases from cuts will be a continuing issue for which I will fight to protect.



Scott Turner

Public Safety and infrastructure continues to be a concern here in our area. Many of our rural roads become impassable at times making it difficult to provide protection and medical assistance to our citizens. Our 911 system while staffed with wonderful people who care about each one of us, is divided into several separate systems, making communication difficult and delaying much needed help in many circumstances. Regionalizing our 911 system would provide reduced dispatch times across our county resulting in better, more effective service. Making sure that we continue to fund our Sheriff's department with a continuation of 1A passed in 2012 coupled with a renewed focus on maintaining our infrastructure will also serve to improve overall public safety.

DEMOCRAT



Liz Rosenbaum

Each district in the county faces unique challenges. In District 4, which I'm running to represent, water is an important issue: its supply and safety must be assured. Land use, business development, affordable housing, and road maintenance are also important issues in District 4, as well as in every other District of the county. If elected, I will bring my talents for listening, learning, and understanding to addressing to all of these issues, improving the quality of life for every member of our county and community.



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3. *What should be the county's budget priorities and how will you fund those priorities? (100 words)*

REPUBLICAN



Longinos Gonzalez Jr.

This would be similar to the above priorities: Strengthening Public Safety (Sheriff and Fire); Roads & Infrastructure, plus
-Disaster Recovery: Fire & flood are always a threat, so we must prepare effectively to respond. Funding would also be as mentioned above. I will prioritize budgeting for these areas of emphasis in upcoming budgets. Additionally, I believe a thorough budget audit will identify efficiencies that can better fund these critical county functions. Cutting administrative red tape and streamlining permits will improve the local business climate that will lead to increased revenues without raising taxes that can further fund county priorities.



Scott Turner

The primary budget priority is making sure that the monies collected from the citizens are spent wisely and in a manner consistent with the wishes of those citizens. TABOR gives a simple requirement, if government is going to request additional funds for projects it must ask for those funds and then spend them only in the manner described on the ballot. As public safety and infrastructure are always primary concerns I would expect to see a request for the extension of the PPRTA to fund additional projects and a request to continue 1A for the El Paso County Sheriff.

DEMOCRAT



Liz Rosenbaum

By focusing on solving storm water problems, maintaining and financing parks and recreation areas, to ensuring funding for welfare programs that help our neighbors be successful members of our community rather than punishing them for being poor. Public Education and Public safety will be my top priorities.



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4. Recently the Board of El Paso County Commission passed a resolution opposing the relocation of refugees to El Paso County. Do you support that resolution - why or why not? (50 words)

REPUBLICAN



Longinos Gonzalez Jr.

The Commission resolution opposes the relocation of refugees to the county unless each one is fully vetted and certified by the federal government. In light of highlighted shortfalls in the vetting process this past year, this resolution appears to be reasonable and merited until proper vetting of candidates is confirmed.



Scott Turner

The resolution simply stated that the Board of County Commissioners opposed the relocation of refugees unless each one is fully vetted and certified by the federal government not to pose a threat to the community. This makes any refugees go through the same process as any other legal immigrant.

DEMOCRAT



Liz Rosenbaum

I absolutely oppose this fundamentally un-American resolution of exclusion. Anne Frank wanted to be a refugee. Albert Einstein was a refugee. I don't want to turn away another Anne Frank or another Einstein. We should help these people – because it is the decent, loving, and human thing to do.



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Candidates for the following races were invited to participate in the survey and did not respond:

District 2: Tim Geitner, Mark Waller